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## The Greatest Show On Earth

Dorothy H. Smith\*

\*Iowa State College

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# The Greatest Show On Earth



*By Dorothy H. Smith, '38*

THE moist hand of my small cousin tugged at my arm as I forced my way up to the ticket wagon to satisfy Donny's insistent plea to see the "ellerfinks." When we had almost reached the ticket window, a tall ruddy-cheeked fellow in faded overalls and sweat-stained hat pushed me brusquely aside. Having received his ticket, he pushed ahead and left me flush with the window. I handed the money across the counter in exchange for two tickets. The green pasteboards were in turn collected, torn through the center, and thrown on the already littered ground. As sand runs through an hour glass, Donny and I were poured through the gate by the pressure of the noisy crowd behind us. A tacky-uniformed attendant led us up a crowded aisle to the precarious seating on a once green plank, warped in the center. At the entrance, a fat man was so absorbed in munching popcorn and watching the performers that the attendant had to ask him to move over. His wife, in a mail-order black satin dress, glared at me as she struggled with a sticky, whining baby on her lap. Donny bounced his newly purchased balloon on my nose as I tried to attract the attention of a friend twelve rows below me. Not a breath rippled the canvas ceiling, and the air was almost stifling with its myriad odors. Trying to balance myself as well as Donny and at the same time trying to keep my purse from sliding off my knees through the planks to the ground below, I heard the band strike up "America." A great hush fell over the entire throng as everyone held his breath. Donny's balloon slipped from his grasp and floated lazily toward the canvas roof as his eager eyes followed the stately march of the "ellerfinks" around the ring.